

programs can refer to the corresponding hierarchical link tables and can access desired hierarchical node databases. When the hierarchical data structure is to be changed, such as by the addition of an application due to a new request, a corresponding alteration need only be reflected in the hierarchical link table.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please add the following new claims:

SUB B27
A2 6. (New) A database system for storing and managing data for use by a plurality of application programs that perform distinct operations, comprising:

a hierarchical node database for storing node data to be used by a first and a second application program;

a first hierarchical link table for defining a first unique hierarchical structure of the node data for the first application program; and

a second hierarchical link table for defining a second unique hierarchical structure of the node data for the second application program.

7. (New) The database system of claim 6, wherein the node database comprises a plurality of data entries, each having a node identifier and a set of node attributes.